

## The Revolution That Wasn't

By: Jacob Laksin

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*The Revolutionary Communist Party engineered a nationwide protest to overthrow the Bush administration. Bush is still here. . . .*

For most Americans this November 2<sup>nd</sup> was a day like any other, but for [World Can't Wait](#) (WCW), a coalition of front groups for the Revolutionary Communist Party, it was the beginning of a revolution and the imminent downfall of the Bush administration.

So, at any rate, the group claimed. To mark the one-year mark anniversary of President Bush's reelection—a grim day by the reckoning of WCW acolytes—the group organized what it called a “truly massive day of resistance all over this country.” Indeed, since its founding in New York this past June, the nationwide protests planned for November 2<sup>nd</sup> had been the group's guiding purpose. That has much to do with the group's sincerely-held belief that modern America stands on the brink of fascism—a core conviction of WCW's founder, the longtime communist activist [Charles Clark Kissinger](#). A veteran rabble rouser, Kissinger played marginal role in fomenting the 1992 Los Angeles race riots, when he hailed the raging violence as a people's “rebellion.”

WCW had a cognate agenda in store for November 2<sup>nd</sup>. In anticipation of the big day, vowed by the group's organizers to be the “beginning of the end of the Bush regime,” the group's website urged supporters to remember that “November 2 must be a massive and public proclamation that WE REFUSE TO BE RULED IN THIS WAY.” Not only that, but “November 2 must call out to the tens of millions more who are now agonizing and disgusted” by the Bush administration.

As it happened, the tens of millions had better things to do than rage at the “Bush regime.” And while small-scale protests did place in a number of cities, including New York, Los Angeles, Seattle, San Francisco, Atlanta and Chicago, they succeeded neither in the eviction of the hated president nor the communist revolution that WCW organizers candidly proclaim themselves to be fighting for.

The closest that WCW came to their much-hyped fight was the San Francisco protest. The festivities began with a reading of a statement from the Revolutionary Communist Party. That was followed by a taped message from convicted cop-killer Mumia Abu Jamal, a declared supporter of World Can't Wait. Anti-war termagant Cindy Sheehan, another prominent booster of the group, delivered a speech.

But it was not so much the mission of WCW members as their penchant for violence that caught the media's attention, especially the *San Francisco Chronicle's*, whose building was [bombarded](#) by a Molotov cocktail. Far from condemning the violence, WCW gleefully extolled the “militant” atmosphere of the San Francisco protest—a position that becomes more explicable when one considers that WCW members, urged by WCW supporters to harass ideological opponents, have in the past threatened physical attacks against conservatives like David Horowitz and Berkeley law professor John Yoo. And while most of the 1,500 protestors in San Francisco limited themselves to hoisting the group's signature acid-green signs, police were moved to arrest nine WCW members after they staged a “die-in” on a busy street, stalling traffic for nearly an hour.

Los Angeles, too, saw its share of WCW-organized excitement. Most prominently, some 800 Los Angeles-area high school students cut class to swell the crowds of protestors. It was no coincidence. WCW organizers routinely exhort students to violate their schools' rules and regulations in order to take part in protest rallies. For instance, on October 31, WCW's Allen Lang, a self-professed member of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade, [authored](#) a “message to high school students.” In it, he called on them to take part in “walkouts” and “campus shutdown” on November 2, disobeying school principals if necessary. WCW's [website](#) meanwhile is expressly aimed at teenagers who want to “drive out the Bush regime.” The chief operating officer of the Los Angeles Unified School District later said that students in as many as 10 high schools walked off from school to join the protest; the WCW claimed on its website that in not a few cases, they were joined by their teachers. Nonetheless, the resulting rally, reportedly numbering several thousand at a most, succeed mainly in snarling traffic on Los Angeles's freeways.

More typical were the New York protests. There several thousand activists, the majority of them college and high school students who had skipped class on the prompting of WCW organizers, spilled out into the streets. WCW organizer Sunsara Taylor did her best to fire up the underage troops. “The Bush regime is out to remake the world with its policies,” she insisted. “From the war in

Iraq to environmental policies to the remaking of the Supreme Court ... we are staring down the barrel of fascism in this country.” But it was no use. After marching for two miles up the city’s 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the protestors disbursed, their plan to oust the president having come to naught. And while a few of the more zealous types brandished banners declaring, “Ready for Revolution,” most protestors, it seemed, were not.

Still less impressive was the WCW display staged in Atlanta. About 500 college and high school students showed up to hear the deputy director for the Southern Region of Amnesty International rail against the Bush administration’s treatment of terrorist captives. That reminded someone to voice their support for a hunger strike waged by some detainees at Guantanamo Bay. A small group of high school students read a WCW announcement pledging the overthrow of the Bush administration. But the revolution went to further.

Equally timid were the protests in Seattle, where several hundred protestors gathered to collectively vent their frustration at anything and everything that could be pinned, with varying degrees of improbability, on the Bush administration. In Chicago, the main—indeed the only—news event of the protest was the announcement of a new WCW slogan: “Bush Must Step Down and Take His Whole Program with Him,” an event that the 500 protestors who congregated in the city’s downtown seemed very far from hastening.

Lack of celebrity support was not to blame. The Los Angeles rally featured an appearance by Bianca Jagger, while several members of the far-Left cognoscenti, including Gore Vidal, Kurt Vonnegut, Howard Zinn, Cornel West, and Nobel laureate Harold Pinter, penned glowing endorsements of the WCW campaign. Pinter, in his statement of support, sounded one of WCW’s preferred themes: likening the Bush administration to the Nazis: “The Bush administration,” Pinter [wrote](#), “is the most dangerous force that has ever existed. It is more dangerous than Nazi Germany because of the range and depth of its activities and intentions worldwide.”

To be sure, even prior to November 2<sup>nd</sup>, WCW had downplayed the prospects of success. For all its rhetoric promising the nascent expulsion of the Bush administration, the movement’s organizers conceded that a day of coordinated protests “will not stop the regime.” And while it claimed bases of support in 60 American cities, WCW acknowledged that the best its adherents could hope for come November was to “introduce a new dynamic.”

The modesty of this accomplishment was not lost on the WCW faithful. Some professed frustration at the campaign’s inability to attract a sizeable turnout or even attract any prolonged media attention. “I wish there were more people here,” a participant in the WCW’s New York rally [lamented](#). “I don’t understand what everybody’s thinking in this country. What do people need to understand that these people in this administration need to go?” More than WCW is offering, evidently. Theirs, it seems, is a revolution that will not be televised.

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Jacob Laksin is managing editor of Front Page Magazine. His email is [jlaksin -at- gmail.com](mailto:jlaksin-at-gmail.com)